

Members are reminded that, besides the usual meetings on the first Friday of each month, there are meetings on each third Friday, for the consideration of the special subjects of a General Catalogue

of English Literature, and Cataloguing Rules including Size Notation.

At the meeting on February 6, the following papers will be read:

1. "Some points to be considered in preparing Catalogues of Transactions and Periodicals," by Mr. J. B. BAILEY.
2. "Dr. Priestley and his relation to Proprietary Libraries," by Mr. R. HARRISON.

JANUARY MONTHLY MEETING.

THE third Monthly Meeting of the third year of the Association was held at the London Institution on January 2, 1880, at 8 p.m., Mr. ROBERT HARRISON, Treasurer, in the chair.

The minutes of the previous meeting having been read and confirmed, the Chairman called on one of the Secretaries to read a paper by Mr. W. E. A. AXON, on

THE FUNCTIONS OF A NATIONAL LIBRARY, IN REPLY TO Mr. W. P. COURTNEY'S ARTICLE IN THE "FORTNIGHTLY REVIEW."

Mr. AXON objected to the proposal to open branch libraries in London, that it would be to supply the local needs of the metropolis at the expense of the nation, and urged the establishment of local libraries at the expense of the localities, remarking on the inconvenience that would be caused if a person who came from the country to consult a scarce work at the Museum were to find that it had been removed to Bethnal Green. If the library was to be more than it is now the library of the nation, there should be an extension of the time in which it was open, and its use might be increased by correspondence. He also noticed the improvements recently introduced, and the intended publication of a list of accessions, suggested by a memorial of the Manchester Literary Club in 1875; concluding with the remark that the British Museum is great, not because it stands in Bloomsbury, but because it is the national library of a great people.

Mr. TEDDER wished to know in what way the use of the British Museum is to be increased by correspondence, and asked whether the officials were to be pestered with correspondence on all subjects.—Mr. GARNETT said that they already had a good deal of correspondence at the British Museum, and if it were much increased it would be necessary to have a correspondence department.—Mr. OVERALL mentioned a letter that he had received, asking him to send the books by bearer, as the writer was unable to come to the library to consult them.—Mr. HARRISON on one occasion had received a letter asking if the "Adventures of Purley" was an interesting book!—Mr. WILLIAM BLADES then read his paper on

THE DEVELOPMENT OF BOOKS AND THEIR SIZE NOTATION.

Mr. BLADES said: I feel some diffidence in coming before you this evening, because you, as librarians, with a daily experience of books in their various aspects and public uses, must be much more familiar with the difficulties of cataloguing all varieties of sizes, as well as



with the actual needs of a public library, than myself. At the same time, a MAKER of books may be supposed sometimes to be more conversant with certain technical peculiarities than the custodian. There are, too, always side branches to every subject—in bibliography they are numerous—and if, by the pursuing only of one of these, you should think that I have thrown any light upon the librarian's method of working, especially in cataloguing his old books, I shall feel highly gratified. The doctrines of Development and the Survival of the Fittest have thrown floods of light upon many departments of natural history, and, I believe, may be usefully applied to the study of bibliography. The penny steam-printed volumes of to-day, although differing in all points from the vellum MSS. of the middle ages, are the lineal descendants from them, and only parted with their family likeness by degrees. It may not be a useless task just to note one or two early developments of the printed sheet, as they serve to explain apparent anomalies of signature in old books. At the time when Gutenberg was working out his typographical ideas in Mayence, the demand for books had increased so much that the manufacture of manuscripts had become an important branch of commerce, being carried on by communities of Book-makers, chiefly in Paris and Bruges. In commencing a new book the first thing was to obtain the requisite quantity of vellum from the parchemientier, the sheets being of one size and thickness. The sheets were then all folded in half and put quirewise in sections of four, five, or six each, according to the size of the book. Each section was then signed at the very bottom of the first recto of each sheet before beginning to write; then, if the section had four sheets, there would be eight leaves, and the first four were signed respectively aj, aij, aiij, aiiij. The reason for signing first was to assist the manuscript writer, who used the sheets singly as he wrote, and required a plain clue to their sequence. To the binder it was simply a necessity, for he depended upon them, and them only, for the sequence of the sheets. When he had checked their proper succession and found all right, he bound the book, ploughing off the MS. signatures, which on that account are nearly always wanting in MSS. In some cases, however, these signatures may still be seen, either whole or partly cut away. The first printers were under the same necessity as the scribes, and it is interesting to note how, in the infancy of the art, they pursued the same plan, not only of cutting up their paper if they had to print a less size than folio, just as the scribe cut his vellum, but that they, too, signed every sheet in MS. at the very bottom, just as their predecessors the scribes had done. In the celebrated sale of the Perkins' Library there was an uncut copy of the "Mazarine Bible" so signed; and in the Royal Library, Windsor, is "Le Recueil des Histiores de Troye," where every sheet has a MS. signature at the very foot of the first recto. Here is a book printed about 1470, at Cologne, entitled "Eusebius de morte sancti Jeronimi," and you will see that each section is signed in manuscript, and that several have

been cut away by the binder. It was not long, however, before the printers determined to rid themselves of that trouble by adopting the easy though ugly plan of printing the signatures at the same time as the text, and placing them immediately under the bottom line. The changed position was a matter of technical convenience, as a signature standing alone at a distance from the text would be sure to break off. What I wish to impress upon you is that signatures in some shape were necessary. The notion that books were bound without signatures is a bibliographical delusion and historically erroneous. The dates given by some writers for the first use of signatures can only apply to the period when printed signatures superseded those written by hand. The scribes had (so far as I can learn) no names for the different sizes of their vellum books. Various catalogues of great libraries in the 14th and 15th centuries have come down to us, but although the MSS. are carefully described as to the character of the writing, the illuminations and bindings, yet no sizes are affixed. In some cases, however, an approach to size is made where a great "History of the World" is called "un grand livre" and a small Horæ "un petit livre." When, however, the demand for books had given a great impetus to the paper-makers, and when, just before the invention of printing, the more common books were written upon paper, then for the first time the sub-division of sheets into 4to, 8vo, or 16mo, came into use. As with vellum so with paper, the scribes cutting up the material of both to size before using it. And as with the scribes so with the early printers, who also cut up their sheets first if they printed smaller than folio. Soon, however, a development took place in the direction of cheapness, and the printers devised a plan of printing four 4to pages at a time instead of two, by making a double pull—that is, by printing two pages by the first pull, and then, without lifting the tympan, rolling the table further in and pulling the other two. This developed a form of signature which has been a trial to a good many bibliographers, who have puzzled themselves when finding a 4to volume signed on the first and third rectos only. When this occurs, which is but seldom, it is evidence that the sheets were printed whole and so arranged that, when folded, one sheet should quire within the other; thus making for a 4to, eight leaves, but with the first recto only of each sheet signed. Take two sheets and fold in 4to, and sign the first recto of each, and you obtain naturally a signature on the 1st and 3rd rectos, quite sufficient as a guide to the binder. The plan, however, most commonly adopted was to sign every recto as far as the centre of the quire, and to leave the other rectos unsigned. When, as in the infancy of the art, the printer cut up his paper, before printing, to 4to or 8vo, and then printed only two pages at a time, this was necessary; but a custom once established has great vitality, and so for a long time the same method of signing was retained, even though, the eight leaves being all part of one sheet and printed at the same time, this excess of signing was un-

necessary. Here is "The Dialogue of Comfort," printed in 1573, in 8vo, and in whole sheets, yet it is signed on the four first rectos. The Aldus family do not seem to have printed smaller than 8vo, but the Elzevirs and Plantins used 8vo and 12mo abundantly, still keeping the old fashion of signing. We may here notice another peculiarity of signature, often seen, and that is, signing the first five leaves of a quire and leaving the last three unsigned. That is, the central sheet was signed on both rectos, and this told the binder that it *was* the central sheet, and that he need not examine further. As, then, folio, 4to, 8vo, and even smaller books were signed and collated in sections of eight leaves each, it is quite evident that, however satisfactory to the binder, it cannot serve in any way as a guide to the size of the book. The tendency to print small books developed another practice which ought to be recognised and understood. We will say that it is decided to print a volume in 24mo—well, there is no reason why the whole side of the sheet should not be printed at once, so we will fold this sheet of foolscap into folio, first of all, then into three, making a 6to, then into two, and two again, making a 24mo. Now here the back is evidently too cumbersome for so small a size, and, as the paper cannot be cut in half, we must cut it into three, and then folding each third into eight we get three small quires, each of eight leaves, and each signed on the first four rectos, a favourite form in the 17th century.

[The remainder of this paper and the discussion thereon will appear in our next number.]

LIBRARY NOTES.

CORPORATION LIBRARY, GUILDHALL.—During the year 1879 this library was open on 250 days from 10 a.m. to 9 p.m., and on 51 days from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Total, 301 days. The number of readers up to 5 p.m. was 108,495; from 5 to 9 p.m., 32,415; total, 140,910.

ORTELIUS' CORRESPONDENCE.—Among the manuscripts belonging to the Library of the Dutch Church, now deposited in the Corporation Library, Guildhall, is a collection of the unpublished correspondence of Abraham Ortelius, the famous geographer, comprising more than 300 letters written by Ortelius himself and many eminent contemporaries. The Consistory of the Church have determined to print these letters, and have made arrangements to have them transcribed for the press.

LONDON INSTITUTION.—Mr. Parr's ingenious card ledger, exhibited at the Manchester meeting, was put in use on the 1st of December, and has fully realized all expectations. Even in point of rapidity it is found to be distinctly superior to the written ledger, and its superiority is particularly manifest at those times of pressure when its break-down seemed possible.

PHARMACEUTICAL SOCIETY OF GREAT BRITAIN.—A new catalogue of the library of this society (including the catalogue of the North British Branch Library) has been prepared by Mr. J. W. Knapman,

the librarian, and is now passing through the press. It is on the dictionary system, author and subject entries and cross references under one alphabet. The library contains about 7,000 volumes and pamphlets, principally on materia medica and the accessory sciences, as botany, chemistry, &c.

SOCIETY OF TELEGRAPH ENGINEERS.—The valuable and unique library belonging to this society, and formed by the late Sir Francis Ronalds, F.R.S., is now in course of binding, and when finished will be opened for reference.

It will be remembered that at the meeting in September, 1878, Mr. Frost, the librarian of the society, read an interesting paper giving an account of this library and its catalogue, which not only describes the books in the library, but forms a complete bibliography of electricity and magnetism. After due consideration, it has been decided to bind the works in half-morocco and cloth, with raised bands, lettered with the author's name, title, and the words "Ronalds Library." The pamphlets will be bound in volumes, in chronological order, as far as their size will allow. The use of buckram was duly considered; but, though some catalogues are to be bound in that material as an experiment, Mr. Frost was not disposed to recommend its adoption for all books in the library. The printing of the catalogue has proceeded as far as the letter M (about 400 pages), and before distributing the type, a small edition on large paper, on one side only, will be printed for the use of librarians. The work has been much delayed, owing to the difficulty of referring to the books and pamphlets in their present condition.

HORNCASTLE MECHANICS' INSTITUTE.—The "Combined" Charging System by Cards of Mr. J. Schwartz, New York Apprentices' Library (*Lib. Jour.* v. 4, pp. 275-7), has been introduced in this library, and works very satisfactorily. The bequest of the late H. Fielding, Esq., consisting of £100, has been the means of considerably augmenting the standard reference works in the library.

LINCOLN LIBRARY.—This library, which has a very good collection of local pamphlets, &c., is suffering from the usual complaint so often heard of in old-fashioned towns, viz., inaptness on the part of the Managing Committee to keep up with the times, and relying upon rules which are singularly inappropriate to the present age. A select Committee has been formed to consider the position of the library, and the best mode of increasing its popularity and usefulness.

WORCESTER.—Mr. Samuel Smith, of Leeds, has been appointed Librarian to the newly-established Free Library. The Corporation has purchased the building, collections, books, and pictures belonging to the Natural History Society for £2,820. These collections, with the 11,000 volumes already purchased from the old City Library, will afford the new Librarian an unusual amount of good material upon which to begin work, and the people of Worcester may be congratulated on the success attending the adoption of the Acts.

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTES.

At the end of the Journal published by the Royal Microscopical Society is now given a classified index to the current papers on microscopical science, contained in upwards of three hundred British and Foreign Scientific Journals and Transactions, with abstracts of some of the more important ones.

The Editor of the *Journal of Science* (monthly, formerly the *Quarterly Journal of Science*) announces that he has determined to incorporate with it a Subject-Index to the leading English and Foreign Scientific Journals, with a separate paging; and invites practical suggestions from those experienced in making such indexes.

The third part (E-L) of the Subject-Index to the "Catalogue général de la Librairie Française, depuis 1840, par O. Lorenz," has just been issued.

ASTRONOMY.—The prospectus has been issued of a "Bibliographie générale de l'Astronomie, ou Catalogue méthodique des Ouvrages, des Mémoires, et des Observations Astronomiques, publiés depuis l'origine de l'imprimerie jusqu'en 1880, par J. C. Houzeau, directeur, et A. Lancaster, bibliothécaire de l'Observatoire Royal de Bruxelles." The work will be published by subscription, and will consist of three volumes, devoted respectively to books, memoirs, and observations. To judge from the specimen, the books appear to be carefully described and the classification seems minute and easily followed. An idea of the extent of the undertaking may be gathered from the fact that the "Catalogue of Scientific Papers" contributes no less than 16,000 articles, and the "Repertorium Commentationum" of Reuss as many as 4,000.

CRAY-FISH.—Professor Huxley's recent work on the Cray-fish contains a classified bibliography of the books and memoirs treating the subject.

SERVETUS.—M. Ch. Dardier contributes a bibliography of the works by and connected with Servetus, in a recent translation of "Michel Servet: Portrait-caractère, par Henri Tollin, pasteur à Magdebourg." Herr Tollin has himself written altogether no less than 34 books, pamphlets, and separate articles relating to Servetus.

PSEUDONYMS.—In a letter to the *Times* of January 5th, Mr. J. Pinchbeck, C.E., explains that "Sir Edward Seaward's narrative" was only looked through by Miss Jane Porter, the reputed editor, the work having been written by her brother, Dr. Porter, of Bristol, in conjunction with a lady of their acquaintance, the widow of Colonel Booth. In the same number of the *Times*, the author of "The Little Pilgrim" is stated to be Mary Metford Thomas, who wrote the work in, or about, 1843. The Mrs. Helen Petrie, whose name is mentioned on the title of the book, has only edited and revised the work.

QUERIES.

LIBRARY LADDERS.—All library ladders I have yet seen are either dangerous or clumsy. Can any ingenious reader devise a ladder that shall be at once safe and handy? H. R. T.

SIZE NOTATION.—The word "size" to indicate the dimensions of a book also serves in English for the "format." Would not some of the misunderstandings of size notation be done away with if we adopted the word "form" in technically describing the size or arrangement of the sheets and signatures, while restricting "size" to indicate actual outside height, breadth, and thickness? H. R. T.

BOOK TAG.—What is the best form of book tag that will answer the following conditions? 1. Adhere closely, especially under the action of friction and heat. 2. Thin in material, and yet durable in wear and tear. J. C. H.

PAROCHIAL LIBRARIES.—What has become of the Parochial Lending Library established by the Rev. H. B. Wilson, D.D., in the parishes of St. Mary Aldermary, and St. Thomas the Apostle? A catalogue was issued in 1851. SUPER OMNES.

BOOK WANTED.—Can any of your correspondents inform me if the "History and Antiquities of the Parish and Church of St. Michael, Crooked Lane, London," has ever been completed? I have three parts ending p. 240; no author nor date of publication given. SUPER OMNES.

AUTHORS WANTED.—Who was the author of "A Present for an Apprentice . . . by a late Lord Mayor of London," 8vo, London. (?) The fifth edition was published in 1747, and an earlier one, probably the first, in Nov. 1739. C. C.

Is the Christian name of Miss Marsh, authoress of the "Life of Captain Hedley Vicars," Catherine or Caroline? Catalogue authorities differ on this point. C. C.

CORRESPONDENCE.

LIBRARIANS AND THE PURCHASE OF BOOKS.

Sir,—In his Inaugural Address at the London Conference in 1877, Mr. J. Winter Jones, then principal librarian of the British Museum, strongly urged the propriety of library committees giving to their librarians a vote in the purchase of books. Might I suggest that the Association as a body should take some means of recommending this course to committees,

I am, &c.,

January, 1880.

A LIBRARIAN.

London: TRÜBNER & CO., Ludgate Hill.

*Single Numbers, Threepence each. Annual Subscription,
post free, 3s. 6d.*